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# LETTER DATED 1 JUNE 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

During meetings with the President of the Security Council in May, the Secretary-General and a number of States members of the Council, I drew attention to the fact that the escalation of the military action by the Republic of Armenia on the territory of Azerbaijan threatens the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of our Republic. Your predecessor has shown understanding for our deep anxiety by sending the United Nations fact-finding mission headed by Mr. F. Vendrell. The Mission was received by Mr. Isa Gambarov, Chairman of the Azerbaijani Parliament, who stated that if the international community would not recognize the fact of Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan, the tragedy would continue further.

I wish to add that the Republic of Armenia pursues its political goals not only by the use of force, but that its armed forces have also resorted to using chemical weapons. The effects of iprit, cyanide and phosgen were detected during blood tests of wounded Azeris in the recent Nakhichevan events.

I have the honour to draw your attention to the enclosed statements of several Member States and the number of international organizations.

I would like to underline their principled position with great satisfaction.

Margaret Tutwiler, the United States State Department spokeswoman, announced during the briefing on 21 May 1992 that the United States "will not accept unilateral changes in the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, Nakhichevan, or any other territory [by] military actions or violence" (The New York Times, 22 May 1992).

The important statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation says that "No current circumstances can permit the State to resort to the annexation of foreign territory. No one can count on the support of Russia for such unlawful actions" (Izvestiya, 23 May 1992).

In this connection, the North Atlantic Council stated on 22 May 1992 that "any action against Azerbaijan's or any other State's territorial integrity or to achieve political goals by force would represent a flagrant and unacceptable violation of the principles of international law and CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe]". It should be mentioned that the Council calls for taking "immediate steps to de-escalate the conflict, including withdrawal from occupied areas".

Furthermore, an important announcement on this question was made by the European Community on 22 May 1992, which says that "the Community and its member States condemn in particular ... any actions against territorial integrity or designed to achieve political goals by force, including the driving out of civilian population".

As Your Excellency is aware, the Committee of Senior Officials of CSCE at its last meeting prepared a document on the current situation in the region. The document says that participating countries "state in the strongest terms their demand for respect of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and call for immediate cessation of hostilities". The adoption of this document was blocked by the negative position of Armenia.

As will be seen from the foregoing, several members of the international community and a number of international organizations are deeply concerned with the complicated situation in the region and the Armenian actions are regarded as violating the territorial integrity of a sovereign State - the Azerbaijani Republic - and, that in accordance with the well-known resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, must be qualified as aggression.

At a time when the world community is trying to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and the preparations for the Rome Conference of CSCE on this problem are taking place, the Armenian forces attacked on 31 May 1992 the town of Chaikend close to the city of Gianja, threatening its population of 500,000 inhabitants.

I would appreciate it if you could kindly have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hassan HASSANOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I

Article in The New York Times, 22 May 1992, p. A29

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Leslie H. Gelb

War in Nakhichevan

As Armenian irregulars bear down on Nakhichevan (an Azerbaijani enclave in Armenia) and gain control of Nagorno-Karabakh (an Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan), and as Turkey debates intervening to protect its Turkic and Muslim brethren, Bush Administration policy dances on the point of a needle.

United States political imperatives - influential Armenians, mainly in the pivotal state of California - strongly favor Armenia. Policy considerations - plans to develop Ankara as a strategic counterweight to Iran and Russia in Central Asia - all tug toward Turkey.

An enclave, Armenia, Turkey and the United States

Margaret Tutwiler, the State Department spokeswoman, danced to these two tunes earlier this week. She began by announcing that the United States "will not accept unilateral changes in the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, Nakhichevan, or any other territory [by] military actions or violence". Then came these exchanges:

Q: The status is that Nagorno-Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan. The Azeris are presumably not trying to change that status. Is it right by the process of elimination to assume it must be the Armenians?

Tutwiler: There are ... a number of views of this situation ... our point today ... is [the escalating violence].

Q: So the situation is that the United States simply will not take a position on who is the aggressor and who is the victim ...?

Tutwiler: Right ...

Q: What does it mean that the United States "is not going to accept unilateral changes ..."?

Tutwiler: We use this phrase in any number of instances ... It is a standard phrase that we use here. I can't explain to you why they do; it's been used for years ...

Q: It also normally precedes some strong action by the United States ... You used the statement "will not accept" just before we went into Panama with military force as well. Are we prepared to take some further strong action in this situation?

Tutwiler: Not to my knowledge.

Behind the scenes, President Bush and Secretary of State Baker have been working the telephones to Yerevan. They are telling Armenian leaders to stop the fighting in Nagorno and accept mediation by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and to hold back their irregulars in Nakhichevan. And they are pleading with Ankara not to intervene.

While United States diplomacy has been evenhanded, Administration feelings are increasingly anti-Armenian. Officials do not accept Yerevan's assertion that it has no control of Armenian irregulars in Nagorno and Nakhichevan. They believe, as one key official put it, that the Armenians, long the victims in this region, are "trying to create military facts on the ground while our hands are tied by our elections - just the way the Serbs are doing it in Bosnia".

The comparison is nasty, and Armenian-Americans are well aware of the increasing Administration tilt toward Turkey. "But they can't do anything about it this year," said Van Krikorian of the Armenian Assembly in Washington, referring to White House worries about Armenian support in the Presidential campaign.

Then Mr. Krikorian put down the policy card United States officials fear most. If Washington abandons Armenia diplomatically or stands by while Turks kill Armenians once again, he said, "Armenia would have to look to Iran for security."

To Administration officials, Iranian fundamentalism represents the immediate threat to Western interests in Central Asia. They hope to build up Turkey, a Muslim but secular nation, as the alternative. And they do not want Armenian military successes against Turkic peoples to put Ankara in a position where it must either stand aside and look impotent or intervene with force.

Turkish intervention would compel the United States to back Armenia for politics' sake and undercut Ankara. It might also trigger what officials see as the long-term threat to Central Asia - a resurgent Russia. Already this week, a senior Russian general warned hyperbolically that outside intervention would "obviously place us on the verge of a third world war ...".

Telling these ancient enemies not to kill each other will not take the United States and the West far. At some point they will have to hold Armenia in check. And the only way to do that is by guaranteeing long-victimized Armenians their security at home and their rights in Azerbaijan. Otherwise history will return with a vengeance.

## Annex II

## Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 22 May 1992

Moscow, 22 May. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation expresses its deep regret and grave concern about the latest events regarding the town of Lachin (Nagorno-Karabakh) and Nakhichevan, which have again resulted in loss of human life and escalation of hostilities and have provoked additional tension in the whole region.

No current circumstances can permit the State to resort to the annexation of foreign territory. No one can count on the support of Russia for such unlawful actions. That is why it is impossible to consent to the seizure of the town of Lachin and, if it has really happened, to the attacks of militant groups on the Nakhichevan areas bordering Armenia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation strongly urges all the parties involved in the confrontation to the cease-fire to begin talks, to use the unrealized potential of various peacemaking missions which promote political settlement of the conflict around Nagorno-Karabakh. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation expresses its readiness to mediate in stopping the bloodshed and in searching for a political solution to the crisis.

## Annex III

## Statement made on 22 May 1992 by the North Atlantic Council on the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh

Allies are profoundly disturbed by the continuing bloody conflict and loss of life in the context of the crisis centred on Nagorno-Karabakh. The recent grave intensification and extension of the violence beyond Nagorno-Karabakh, including Nakhichevan, which threatens to escalate the conflict substantially, concerns all of us and endangers the efforts by the international community, led by CSCE, to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Allies condemn the continuing use of force and call on all parties involved to establish immediately an effective cease-fire. They further call on them to take additional immediate steps to de-escalate the conflict, including withdrawal from occupied areas, and to cooperate with international efforts to achieve a negotiated solution and end the tragic suffering of the peoples of the area. Allies appeal to all parties to facilitate the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance to victims of this tragic conflict.

There can be no solution to the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh or to the differences it has caused between Armenia and Azerbaijan by force. Any action against Azerbaijan's or any other State's territorial integrity or to achieve political goals by force would represent a flagrant and unacceptable violation of the principles of international law and CSCE. In particular, we could not accept that the recognized status of Nagorno-Karabakh or Nakhichevan can be changed unilaterally or by force. All people in the region affected by the crisis are entitled to the protection afforded by CSCE principles and commitments. We also deplore the expulsion of people from their homes. A lasting solution to the conflict can only be achieved through negotiations in good faith based on respect for international norms and obligations. Especially those embodied in the Helskinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and other CSCE documents.

In particular, allies call urgently on all parties concerned to prepare constructively and without further hostilities for the CSCE Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh to begin as soon as possible. This Conference must resolve the conflict and the bloodshed. Allies strongly urge all States concerned to seize this opportunity to achieve a permanent, peaceful settlement.

## Annex IV

## Statement on Nagorno-Karabakh issued by the European Community and its member States on 22 May 1992

The Community and its member States express their deepest concern at the latest escalation of the fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and strongly condemn the use of force by whatever side. The Community and its member States deplore the renewed suffering inflicted on populations and the loss of human life resulting from the continuing fighting.

All inhabitants of both Armenia and Azerbaijan, including the Armenian and Azeri populations of Nagorno-Karabakh are entitled to the same levels of protection afforded by their Government's acceptance of the principles and commitments of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Therefore, the Community and its member States condemn in particular as contrary to these principles and commitments any actions against territorial integrity or designed to achieve political goals by force, including the driving out of civilian populations. The fundamental rights of Armenian and Azeri populations should be fully restored, in the context of existing borders.

The Community and its member States appeal to Armenia and Azerbaijan to show maximum restraint and to contribute constructively to the CSCE process. In this context they also urge all parties to work towards the early convening of the CSCE peace conference on Nagorno-Karabakh and to find a solution regarding the modalities of a representation of the communities of Nagorno-Karabakh, without which no lasting peace can be established.

Annex V

Document prepared by the Committee of Senior Officials of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

The Committee of Senior Officials received with deep concern reports of recent developments in the crisis between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Despite repeated efforts to arrange a lasting cease-fire and despite continued statements by all parties of their intention to seek a peaceful solution, the fighting has escalated. Recent heavy exchanges of fire have resulted in expansion of the crisis on the territory of Azerbaijan. Major cities have been subjected to bombardment and military occupation. Prospects for a negotiated settlement to the crisis have been damaged severely.

CSCE participating States remain determined to pursue all efforts to ensure progress towards such a peaceful settlement based on CSCE principles. They cannot accept the continuing destruction and the tragic loss of human life which results from continuation of the violence. They are concerned that, left unchecked, this conflict could tear the fabric of hard-won democratic development which has only recently begun in the countries of the area. If this were allowed to occur, our efforts to secure a stable and lasting peace throughout Europe would be endangered.

The new situation requires extraordinary steps. As stated in the decision of the Council of Ministers of 24 March 1992, CSCE participating States call on all parties to the conflict to renounce the use of force as a means of settling the dispute. Participating States condemn in particular expansion of the conflict into other areas of Azerbaijan, and reject implications that faits accomplis may be created by military means. They state in the strongest terms their demand for respect of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and call for immediate cessation of hostilities. There should be immediate withdrawal and disarming of all forces involved in the hostilities.

In the light of the urgent need for action to stop the fighting, the participating States have decided to call an emergency meeting of the States taking part in the conference on Nagorno-Karabakh agreed by the Council of Ministers on 24 March 1992. The meeting will be under the responsibility of Mr. Mario Raffaelli, who is chairman of the conference. Its goal should be to explore urgently all aspects of the situation, with a view to reopening the dialogue among parties to the conflict. The meeting should be scheduled as soon as possible. Mr. Raffaelli should present an assessment and recommendations for further actions to a meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials to be held in the first week of June.

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